



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

October 28, 1993

COUNTY FISCAL LETTER (CFL) NO. 93/94-21

TO: COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
COUNTY FISCAL OFFICERS
COUNTY AUDITOR CONTROLLERS
COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON TITLE IV-A EMERGENCY
ASSISTANCE CLAIMING

The purpose of this letter is to present a general overview of the Title IV-A Emergency Assistance Program and to answer many of the questions raised as a result of the statewide implementation of the EA program for county probation departments and county welfare departments (CWD).

Emergency Assistance is a federally funded program under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Under the provisions of the Act, federal financial participation (FFP) is available to provide short term aid to families in emergency situations who meet certain specified criteria.

Under California's Emergency Assistance IV-A State Plan, for the Emergency Assistance Probation Program, an emergency is defined as: "a child's behavior that results in the child's removal from the home and a judicial determination that the child must remain in out-of-home care for more than seventy-two hours."

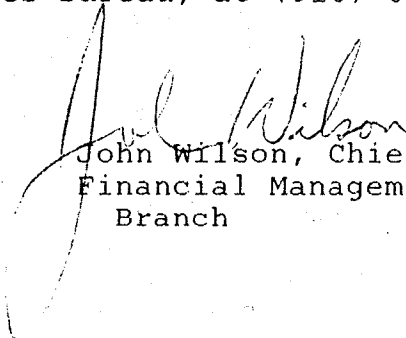
In an amendment to California's Title IV-A State Plan that has been submitted to implement Phase II of the Emergency Assistance program for child welfare services (CWS), an emergency is defined as: "...a child is at risk of abuse, neglect, abandonment or exploitation."

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is the single state agency with the authority to administer the Title IV-A program. CDSS has agreed to accept claims from county welfare departments for Title IV-A eligible administrative costs on behalf of the county probation department and to submit these claims for federal reimbursement. There is no state participation in the funding of these administrative costs and no Title IV-A funds are advanced to the county. The county is responsible for the repayment of all audit exceptions and disallowances taken by federal agencies on Title IV-A funded probation costs. There is no state participation for any probation shelter care costs.

The EA program for county welfare departments allows for the cost of emergency shelter care provided to eligible children from the date of intake at a county-operated emergency shelter care facility, contracted emergency shelter care facility, or with a relative. Title IV-A eligible administrative costs and the first 30 days of EA emergency shelter care are funded with a combination of federal Title IV-A, State General Fund, and county funds.

This CFL is designed to answer those fiscal questions for which we have answers readily available. Because this program is new to California, there are a number of fiscal questions that we must raise to the federal government for a response. As answers become available, you will be notified in future county fiscal letters.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter or the attached question and answer discussion, please call the Fiscal Policy and Procedures Bureau, at (916) 657-3440.


John Wilson, Chief
Financial Management Services
Branch

Attachment

c: CWDA

TITLE IV-A ELIGIBLE
ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Q. Can the sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Probation Department and the Welfare Department be modified?

A. In earlier correspondence, it was pointed out that the MOU was written to ensure the same services are being provided in all counties. Issues regarding such things as who pays the county match for the eligibility workers performing activities for the Emergency Assistance-Probation Program are issues that can be handled in any manner the two departments agree. Other modifications can be made provided they do not affect the overall intent. Please refer to CFL No. 93/94-10, dated August 18, 1993.
2. Q. Will expenses be claimed on a cash or accrual basis?

A. Both administrative and assistance expenditures are reported on a cash basis. Accrued expenditures are not allowable for claiming purposes.
3. Q. How are costs for countywide central support services claimed for EA?

A. Each facility must be included in the Countywide Cost Allocation Plan (A-87 plan), as a separate budget unit, in order to receive an allocation of countywide administrative support costs. This Plan is prepared on an annual basis by the county Auditor Controller and submitted to the State Controller's Office for approval.
4. Q. Can a county claim for a day when the minor is not physically in an institution for any part of the day? This would occur when the minor is on furlough or at the hospital.

A. No.

5. Q. Must the county obtain State approval for the purchase of equipment (e.g. computers) in order to include the charge in the administrative section of the claim? Counties have proposed that one option would be to purchase such equipment out of the institutional budget and include the cost in the capitated rate. Would this be allowable?
- A. Counties must obtain prior approval of all EDP equipment. All equipment is subject to the depreciation requirements established for CWDs. If the equipment is purchased by the institution, only use allowance or depreciation costs may be claimed. Equipment costs of \$25,000 or less can be expensed; equipment over \$25,000 must be depreciated.
6. Q. If the Memorandum of Understanding between the Probation Department and the Welfare Department is signed August 16, 1993, can Probation claim costs for an application taken and approved on August 10, 1993? i.e., can the costs be claimed retroactively?
- A. Yes. CFL No. 93/94-04, dated July 23, 1993, stated that counties could claim costs if all five of the criteria outlined in the CFL were met. One of these was the execution of the MOU. The meaning of this criterion was that a claim could not be submitted to the State prior to the MOU being executed. Please see CFL No. 93/94-10.
7. Q. May counties abate an earlier period of eligibility and the associated claim in favor of a later episode if a minor has a more serious offense during the 12-month period?
- A. Yes. Send a letter to the CWD with a copy of the prior EA application requesting that the CWD abate the prior eligibility and process the new EA application.
- The claim should be abated by subtracting the number of days claimed on the prior claim and adding the number of eligible days to the current claim.
8. Q. If the probation department or the CWD obtains services from other county departments for the EA Program, can these costs be memo-billed to the receiving department?
- A. No. Services provided to the probation department or the CWD by another county operating department must be

billed and entered into the official accounting record. Services provided by central support departments are governed by the Countywide Cost Allocation Plan.

Please note that when the probation department forwards its EA costs to the CWD for inclusion on the AEC, this is not considered a "billing" of any type. The CWD is acting as the vehicle for the federal pass-through.

9. Q. Must the probation department consider any State revenue when calculating the capitated rate?
 - A. We are working with Region IX of the Department of Health and Human Services to clarify exactly which State funds can be included in the computation of the capitated rate. Previously, we took the position that State revenues had to be deducted from the costs used to compute the capitated rate. However, after giving this additional thought, we believe that certain State revenues do not have to be excluded from the computation. In order to make sure we are correct in our assumptions, we are clarifying this issue with Region IX.
10. Q. How should the county reflect revenue received in the form of parental reimbursement for a child housed at a juvenile hall or county camp? For example, a child spends a number of days in juvenile hall and a number of days in the county camp.
 - A. Parental reimbursements may be prorated between the facilities using a logical basis, such as eligible bed days at each institution. These reimbursements are not required to be "child specific". However, federal cost principles require that these reimbursements be applied as a credit to the cost of the facilities.
11. Q. Does the county have the option of adjusting its capitated rate to actual costs on a quarterly basis or annually? Must these adjustments occur at the case-specific level?
 - A. County probation departments have the option of adjusting the capitated rate on an annual or quarterly basis. Annual adjustments are not required to be case-specific. However, the county should be aware that they must be able to adjust to the case specific level if a case is found ineligible and an adjustment must be made.

The CWD must report actual costs on a quarterly basis.

12. Q. May the county establish different aftercare rates for different types of aftercare programs?
- A. Yes. The county may establish different aftercare rates by the type of service provided. Aftercare services must be traceable to a specific case.
13. Q. Does the CWD need to be able to trace costs to a specific case and episodes to a case?
- A. Yes.
14. Q. When calculating a unit of service, is it necessary to multiply the hourly rate by the number of hours in a unit of service for aftercare?
- A. Yes.
15. Q. How many hours are in a unit of service?
- A. The number of hours that the county can document as reasonable.
16. Q. Can an average capitated rate be developed for all institutions in one county?
- A. No. Each institution must have an individual rate.
17. Q. Are counties required to track the costs of services provided for the child by other organizations such as Mental Health or can you bill and include the costs in the capitated rate?
- A. If the services are provided to all children, include the cost in the capitated rate. If the services are purchased, as needed, you must track the costs to the child/episode.
18. Q. Can the probation department use projected costs to build capitated rates and adjust to actual costs at the end of the fiscal year?
- A. Yes.
19. Q. Are administrative costs required on the Episode Summary Tracking document?
- A. No.

20. Q. Is the amount a county pays above the state-approved rate for Foster Care for Probation children eligible for federal financial participation (FFP)?
- A. No. Counties must use the State-approved rate only.
21. Q. Can Probation Officers who work exclusively in the juvenile hall and act as intake and assessment workers be included in the juvenile hall capitated rate?
- A. Yes.
23. Q. There can be a huge delay between the taking of an application and the receipt of a minute order. Is something else acceptable as documentation?
- A. Yes. Counties may use the "scratch sheet" or written notes of the court clerk which are provided by the court at the hearing that allows the child's removal from the home.
24. Q. Is it necessary to complete the Assessment/Service Plan if all the supporting documents are in the file? Some counties do not have an intake/detention report. How should they document the intake decision?
- A. We prefer that the standard forms be completed. However, any documentation is acceptable as long as it is readily audited.
25. Q. When training material refers to a case number, what number is that, i.e., juvenile court record number, county welfare case number, or social security number?
- A. The county may use any uniquely unduplicated numbering system to track episode costs.
26. Q. Will the CWD or the probation department be responsible for the Cumulative Summary of Costs by Episode?
- A. The organization with responsibility for the child will track the costs by episode. For example, the probation department will be responsible for tracking the probation children's costs, including the costs of Foster Care.
27. Q. Will there be a separate line on the Eligibility Time Study for EA?
- A. Yes, there will be time study codes for the Eligibility Determination - EA Probation and Eligibility Determination - EA Child Welfare Services, due to the different funding ratios.

28. Q. How long does a county have to submit supplemental administrative claims?
- A. The CDSS must receive an adjustment administrative expense claim within nine months of the end of the quarter in which the county paid the costs.
29. Q. Are tracking and other case file maintenance activities costs allowable? Must they be tracked to the case?
- A. Tracking and file maintenance are allowable costs and are not tracked to a case.
30. Q. How does a county abate an Eligibility Worker's (EW) time associated with an abated case's direct cost?
- A. There is no need to abate the EW's time.
31. Q. Must the episode summary be sent to the CWD with the probation department's invoice for services?
- A. No. The probation department should keep the episode summary.